



Community

SB 1177



Cornfield State Park Advisory Committee

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**Ex Officio members are individuals who by virtue of their position in government office or agency may be granted ex officio membership on the Advisory Committee subject to the discretion of the Director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.*

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A Unified Vision for Cornfield State Park

**Presented to the Director of California
State Parks**

**By the Cornfield State Park Advisory
Committee**

April 2003



“The purpose of such [urban] parks is to provide a feeling of relief experienced by those entering it on escaping from the cramped, confined, and controlling circumstances of the streets and of town. In other words a sense of enlarged freedom is to all and all times the most certain value and gratification afforded by a park.”

—Landscape Architect Frederick Law Olmsted

INTRODUCTION

With the passage of the Park Bond Act of 2000 and an historic agreement between the City of Los Angeles, an industrial real estate developer, and a coalition of thirty-five neighborhood, urban environmental, and social justice organizations called the Chinatown Yard Alliance, a two-year struggle over the Cornfield, an empty rail switching yard between Chinatown and the Los Angeles River, came to an end.

Calling it a “once-in-a-century opportunity,” Governor Gray Davis signed California Senate Bill No. 1177 on Sept. 28, 2001, authorizing the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation (“State Parks”) to acquire, assess, clean up, plan, design, build and maintain the 32-acre parcel. State Senator Richard Polanco (retired) sponsored legislation that established a Cornfield State Park Advisory Committee (“Committee”) and directed it to present to the Director of State Parks a prioritized list of recommendations for both interim and permanent land uses and facilities at the site.

To ensure continued neighborhood involvement and representation of a wide range of community interests, State Parks conducted months of outreach, leafleting the neighborhood in English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Vietnamese. A pool of more than 100 applicants was winnowed down to thirty-six Committee members - a wildly diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-class

panel of community leaders affiliated with at least 63 different organizations interested in the future of the Cornfield.

The Committee membership also reflected a cross-section of geographical representation ranging from local neighbors surrounding the park property and the broader local community (including downtown Los Angeles) to regional and statewide perspectives. There were five ex-officio members and one federal advisor affiliated with the National Park Service. Dozens of other political representatives, business people, neighborhood activists, and the merely curious dropped in and took part from time to time.

After meeting regularly for almost a year, the Committee developed a strong consensus around a vision for the Cornfield site incorporating four central themes: cultural-historical, including the role of water in the development of the region; connectivity; recreation; and transportation. These themes were presented to the Director of State Parks on December 28, 2002, in an Interim Vision Report. They are now integrated below into a unified vision and recommendations report.

THE CORNFIELD SITE

From the beginning, the Advisory Committee understood the unique opportunities presented by the Cornfield site. Set at the midway point of an evolving 52-mile long Los Angeles river greenway, at the epicenter of one of the most park-poor neighborhoods in the most park-poor metropolitan area of the United States, the Cornfield has been envisioned by everybody on the Committee, in their own way, as a verdant green place in the heart of the city.

In addition to creating open space and playing areas in neighborhoods with little of either, the Committee saw the Cornfield as a place to engage both nature and culture, to create a regional gathering space around the theme of a larger, more diverse L.A. history, which re-connected the city to the river. A ten-minute walk from City Hall, at the first stop on the Gold Line from

Union Station, the Cornfield will be the most accessible park in the historic heart of the city. The Chinatown station Gold Line stop near the south end of the Cornfield and connecting bus service will make the new State Park readily accessible to millions of low-income, transit-dependent families, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and children.



Because the neighborhoods surrounding the Cornfield have been the port of entry for L.A.'s immigrant populations from the time of the Tongva Native Americans to the present, the Committee agreed that the park should tell the story of their struggles and hopes. In 1769, the Portola expedition forded the L.A. River for the first time near the Native American village of Yang-Na and set up base camp on a bluff above the Cornfield. The adjacent El Pueblo Historic Monument commemorates the site of the original pueblo of Spanish soldiers and 44 founding settlers, the Pobladores. Immigrants from all over Central America and Mexico live today in the surrounding neighborhoods, including Solano Canyon to the west, across the river in Lincoln Heights and Boyle Heights to the north and east, and at the William Mead Homes to the south.

Yankee settlers took possession from Mexico beginning in 1846. The Chinese began to arrive in the 1850s, and Chinatown on the west side of the Cornfield is home to immigrant Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cambodians today. Although French and Italian immigrants first arrived prior to the 1850s, European railroad workers and skilled craftsmen poured in after the rails arrived in the 1870s. Many had no place to live and formed camps in Solano Canyon which later became orchards and neighborhoods where now 100-year old homes stand next to modern apartment buildings. Over time, more and more Mexicans in Sonoratown west of the Cornfield began to move to Boyle Heights across the river.

In the 1930s, the Chinese were forcibly removed from Old Chinatown on the southeast to make room for Union Station and relocated to the present Chinatown. Later residents of adjacent Chávez Ravine were removed with a promise that public housing would be built to replace their homes. Ultimately, although the land was taken for this public purpose by eminent domain, the promise was never fulfilled. Instead the City sold the land to the Los Angeles Dodgers, who paved the hillsides for parking and a private stadium.

Today there are 993,047 people within a five-mile radius of the park, including 282,967 (28%) children. The proximity of the site is especially notable as nearly a third of nearby residents live in poverty and have no access to a car. The community is also widely diverse, with 68% Latino, 14% Asian, 11% non-Hispanic white and 4% African-American.¹

¹ Information provided by Center for Law in the Public Interest using 2000 United States census data. Additional notes: Fewer than half of those in the five mile radius have completed high school or the equivalent, and just 15% have a bachelor's degree. The population of California is 32% Latino, 10% Asian, 47% non-Hispanic white, and 6% African-American. The population of Los Angeles County is 45% Latino, 12% Asian, 31% non-Hispanic white, and 10% African-American. Only 9% of households in California and 13% of households in Los Angeles County are without cars. 77% of Californians and 70% of County residents over age 25 have high-school diplomas; 27% of Californians and 25% of County residents have bachelor's degrees.

THE CORNFIELD VISION

Throughout its process, the Committee invited experts to address the group, including George Hargreaves, the Chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture in the Harvard Graduate School of Design. A leading urban park designer, Professor Hargreaves urged the Committee to develop a visionary sense of place at the Cornfield, not just a list of recommended uses. He advised the Committee to be cognizant of the “carrying capacity” of a 32-acre site and to strive for an “organic whole” rather than creating a patchwork, “balkanized” space that seeks to accommodate a multiplicity of interests. A single park, he noted, could not meet the Los Angeles Basin’s entire park, restoration and open space needs.

With this in mind, the Committee has sought to develop an overall sense of vision from which the future park plan and design can emanate. Though many different ideas of what a park should be are represented on the Committee, from the outset there has been a singular spirit of cooperation and a generous respect for alternative points of view. While opinions differed about what the park's ultimate emphasis should be, ranging from wide open and essentially natural to active and heavily planned, the Committee is united in seeing the Cornfield as a gathering place where all social and economic strata can meet, interact and build community.

Indeed, the Committee endorses the view that, since their inception, urban parks have played a unique role in fostering community. Parks celebrate history, provide venues for cultural events, make art accessible, support wildlife habitat and provide opportunities for active recreation. Well-designed and maintained parks can dramatically change perceptions about districts and neighborhoods, attracting businesses, residents and tourists alike. Therefore, properly designed, the park at the Cornfield should enhance the natural environment, celebrate the social, historical and cultural environment, and enrich the lives of those who visit and reside or work nearby.

All of us want to see a park at the Cornfield where the people who use it can find a sense of relief, freedom and “ownership,” making sure it is safe, well maintained and populated every day for as many hours as possible. All of us believe a successful park at the Cornfield can play an important role both in the restoration of the Los Angeles River and in the urban revitalization of Los Angeles.

All of us believe that a park at the Cornfield should be connected to the struggles, the histories, and the cultures of the rich and diverse communities that have surrounded it since the site was settled.

At the same time, the Committee acknowledges the challenge presented by attempting to address multiple needs in a 32-acre space. To successfully meet this challenge, the Committee recommends that State Parks develops linkages with downtown and El Pueblo to the south and to Elysian Park and along the Los Angeles River to River Center, Taylor Yard, Confluence Park, and Griffith Park to the north. Linkage west to Chinatown and Solano Canyon is also essential to park success. To the extent feasible, planning for the Cornfield State Park should be coordinated with other planning efforts in the area, including, for example, the Los Angeles County LA River Master Plan; the Los Angeles City Ad Hoc River Committee; the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy; the LA River bikeway and greenway planning efforts; the proposed Urban Land Trust; the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA); the Los Angeles/San Gabriel River Watershed Council; the Arroyo Seco bikeway plans; and downtown revitalization efforts, such as the Disney Concert Hall, the Cathedral, Grand Avenue Cultural Arts Access and El Pueblo. A coordinated network of parks and open spaces is consistent with the vision presented by the Olmsted Brothers and Bartholomew & Associates in their 1930 report *Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region*.

Although differing perspectives were expressed within the Committee about the priority audiences for park design – e.g., the surrounding neighborhoods, the people of Los Angeles, the people of Southern California or of all California, etc. – the Committee

believes that the park must be designed to serve not only a range of purposes, but a variety of users. The City of Los Angeles is one of the most park-poor areas in the country. Many areas of the city have well below the recommended national standard of 6 to 10 acres of open space per thousand residents, and some areas offer less than one-half acre per thousand residents. It is critical, therefore, that a state park located in the heart of this heavily urbanized area serve cultural, historical, open space, and recreational needs at multiple levels and serve visitors ranging from those of the surrounding neighborhoods to those visiting from around the globe.

Finally, Committee members emphasized time and again throughout the vision process their sense of the extraordinary importance of a park development and the opportunity it creates for the surrounding communities and the City of Los Angeles. There is an overwhelming consensus for the vision of the Cornfield as a critical building block in an urban renaissance of the historic heart of the city – a beginning in the rebirth of downtown Los Angeles and recognition of the richness of our past and the enormous possibilities of our collective future.

ESSENTIAL THEMES

Connectivity

A critical issue is the development of the Cornfield site into the broader design of a Los Angeles River greenway. Though only 32 acres in size, the park is a critical component and the first jewel in an emerald bracelet of the emerging Los Angeles River greenway stretching from the San Gabriel Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. A critical priority, therefore, should be to honor the needs for both urban open space and connection to the river landscape and the Arroyo Seco corridor.

Park users should experience a feeling of connection with the adjoining river greenway. One way to achieve this is with key design elements such as vegetation, art, water features, benches, lighting and interpretation. The park should provide visitors a sense of shade and sanctuary.

The Cornfield should be recognized as an ecological as well as a cultural entity. Through the application of sustainable design and ecological restoration, rehabilitation and remediation, the park should function as an integrated element of the broader landscape and provide a venue for environmental education in a highly urbanized setting.

Park design should consider the latest technology and promote the institution of best management practices for urban landscapes, utilizing methods such as mulching, energy and water conservation, water harvesting, storm water run-off detention, gray water use for irrigation, cisterns, drip/micro-spray irrigation, solar lighting and power, permeable paving and recycled materials. The goal is to strike an ecological balance that ensures the park's health “unto the seventh generation.”²

² The *Seventh Generation* is a guiding principle for California State Parks, and refers to the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy, “In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.”

Fundamental to this goal of Greenway connectivity is the acquisition of suitable transitional parcels adjacent to the Cornfield. On the north, the Midway Railroad Yard, designated by the MTA as a “temporary” staging area for the Pasadena Gold Line, is the only way to connect the Cornfield to Elysian Park and the River. On the west, separated from the Cornfield by the Gold Line Tracks, are eight and a half acres of bluff that connect the Cornfield to Chinatown, Solano Canyon and Cathedral High School. This area includes a recently unearthed brick-lined section of the two-hundred-year old “Mother Ditch,” the Zanja Madre, and the site of the original water wheel that once carried water to Solano Canyon.

In addition, the Cornfield should help connect human communities. Along with the restoration of the Arroyo Seco confluence with the Los Angeles River just upstream, the Cornfield could anchor not only a physical “greenbelt” but a rich multi-ethnic cultural corridor of communities and historic districts that exist throughout Northeast and Central Los Angeles to the City's birthplace of El Pueblo and the Little Tokyo historical district. Through this essential combination of design, acquisition, and restoration, the Cornfield State Park will join the illustrious ranks of this region's numerous cultural, historical and religious institutions.

Cultural/Historical

The Cornfield site is a conduit to understanding the story of Los Angeles from its earliest beginnings. The local resources past, present, and future reveal cultural, economic, and historical narratives of a broader, region-wide scope reflective of the city at large through time. The location of the site at the city's heart along with the centrality of these resources presents a unique opportunity in Los Angeles to forge a connection of people, history, and place by opening a window to understanding the past and tracing the present into the future.

The value of the Cornfield lies in its potential to slice through time, connecting these larger historical and social patterns to the personal stories relevant to the contemporary experience of Angelinos. It will serve as

a touchstone through which all of us can come to see how we fit into the greater Los Angeles story.

The site should also embrace the spirit and hopes of the multi-ethnic communities whose histories and struggles are interwoven with the Cornfield. People have lived and worked in this vicinity for many generations. Historical and cultural narratives can enrich common activities of the site – recreation, education and interpretation – and can serve to inspire and engender cultural connections. In turn, the past enriches and guides how the site can be used in the future.

The park can be planned for open space and outdoor recreational activities to help us understand, enjoy, and interact with the environment. Appropriate landscaping could create a connection with other times and peoples such as Native American hunters and gatherers, Spanish, Mexican, and Italian agricultural villagers, Catholic missionaries, Chinese, Japanese, and African-American workers and early Yankee settlers. Scholars can be encouraged to write and present historical and biographical narratives and explore cultural themes covering all periods of human endeavor, including the present.

The Committee endorsed a vision that embraced the cultural richness of the area. There are many options for parks to achieve this vision. Some include facilities and activities such as a folk-life or cultural center to teach, develop collaborative public history projects, and encourage musical, artistic, culinary, dance, folklore and dramatic presentations and festivals illustrating how the native peoples and the immigrant communities of Los Angeles lived their lives. Improvements of this type, along with murals and other forms of public art, could create common understanding and celebration of the ethnic, religious and cultural traditions that were once present, or are now present in Los Angeles.

A centerpiece of the site history has also been the story of water and the Zanja Madre. This historic use and association dates from prehistoric times into the early days of the Spanish Colonial establishment of El

Pueblo. The Zanja Madre that runs along the western boundary of the Cornfield site and then underground through El Pueblo was the main water line that tapped directly into the Los Angeles River. All other subsidiary zanjias (a total of nine) tapped into the Zanja Madre.

Flowing through the site, the zanja system for water distribution was an open (diversion) ditch. The zanja system was developed soon after the founding of the pueblo in September 1781 and served Los Angeles as the primary source of domestic and irrigation water until 1904. The Los Angeles zanja system was so important that a zanjero (water master) was hired to oversee the system. In the 1860s, he received a higher salary than the mayor, sheriff, and city council members.

The Pobladores needed water and the network of zanjias (or “ditches”) and water wheels for two primary purposes: agricultural irrigation and domestic use. By the 1880s, the zanja was also used as a power source for the City's emerging industry, much of which was located north of the Los Angeles Plaza. During this time the zanja was covered with arched brick in order to reduce the effects of pollution and evaporation.

In the 1870s the site also became the home of the River Station, the first transcontinental railroad depot and freight yard in the city. From this spot for a generation, tens of thousands of people poured into Los Angeles to fulfill their dreams, buying land, visiting as tourists, enjoying the climate, engaging in commerce, finding jobs, settling down as residents, and continuing the struggle for a better life. Its success was a catalyst and foundation for Los Angeles' rise into an economic and industrial power and an ethnically diverse metropolis in the 20th Century. Even so, on this same railroad that brought such opportunity to Los Angeles, many Mexican-Americans would later be deported in the 1930s. A total of one-third of the City's Mexican-American population was forced to leave, many of them United States citizens.

This history of the people, their heritage and legacy and both the natural and built environments in which they lived, should be featured at the site.

Recreation

The future State Park should be designed to actively engage and welcome participation from residents of all ages and nearby communities, encouraging visitors to restore and “re-create” themselves physically, emotionally, spiritually and as members of their communities. Recreational facilities should be open, inviting residents of all ages, and accessible to park



visitors, with no fees or unwieldy bureaucratic procedures limiting their use. As an urban park, the Cornfield will provide a critical recreational option for

thousands of neighborhood and regional residents and the public at large. If the park meets the needs of surrounding communities, neighbors will embrace it and ensure that it remains vibrant and safe.

High-quality recreational facilities in the future State Park should be designed so that relaxation and reflection coexist with team sports and individual exercise. Trails should be interspersed with multiple large, flat, open grassy spaces that can be used by community groups for organized activities. Space should be flexible and able to respond to the changing needs of future generations. Planners should consider the significance of recreation as a cultural activity and expression. For example, the Native American hunters and gatherers played a soccer-like game they called shinny along the river. Organized sports provide myriad benefits for the community: fun, athletics, improved academics, leadership, better health, an alternative to gang membership and crime and a connection to cultural identity and heritage.

The future State Park is a unique opportunity to address the recreational needs of the surrounding under-served communities. The Cornfield should include as part of its legacy a balanced park that includes large open areas for soccer and other sports, integrated harmoniously with the natural setting and the cultural and historical values at stake in this urban California State Park.

Transportation

Transportation has long been prominently associated with the Cornfield site, from the railroads and trolleys in the recent past to the Gold Line currently under construction and the freeways that criss-cross the neighboring communities. Design could both recognize this history and embrace environmentally-friendly transportation systems within the Cornfield, its adjacent communities and all nearby cultural and recreational points of interest.

Because pedestrian access has some limitations, shuttle buses, historic trolleys, and bike paths as well as walking paths should provide the basis for a “heritage trail” connecting other park or destination

sites. The park could address the unique historical transportation linkages of the site through use, for example, of the rail cars from the age of steam and diesel at Traveltown, which would move back and forth as a linkage between the parks.

To address the traffic calming issue, park planning should also recognize safe passages to surrounding communities and pedestrian linkages, particularly in routing the commuter bikeway from the Valley into Union Station. Transportation within the park, whether pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle, transit, parking or national historical trails, should link up with systems outside the park. Transportation systems must be integral to park and recreation uses and designed in a manner consistent with retaining, to the maximum extent possible, land available for other park purposes.

State Parks should develop this plan in coordination with the City of Los Angeles' Recreation and Parks Department, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the L.A. County Los Angeles River Master Plan, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Caltrans, the L.A. City Council Ad Hoc River Committee, the Arroyo Seco Parkway Scenic Corridor Management Plan, the L.A. River Bikeway, the Arroyo Seco Bikeway, greenway planning efforts and other transportation-related planning efforts within the surrounding communities.

Park Name

The Committee is unanimous in its view that the park name is extremely important. It sets the tone for public acceptance and initiates the thought processes for marketing. While stopping short of recommending a specific name, the Committee recommends that the site name should both reflect the rich historic and cultural heritage of the area and convey a relevant statement that will appeal to all ages.

CONCLUSION

The Committee looks forward to continuing its work with State Parks and expects that this report will inform the Cornfield park planning and design process as we enter the General Plan stage. With the extraordinary opportunity that the Cornfield acquisition presents comes a corresponding responsibility to “do it right” by ensuring that the park design process is open, participatory and deliberate and the design ultimately adopted is carefully implemented and adequately funded. The Advisory Committee process and this report are two steps toward that end.

APPENDIX I

CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND RECREATIONAL LINKS

In refining this document, the Committee began to list some of the key cultural, historical, and recreational links in the area along the Los Angeles River and the Arroyo Seco, through the Cornfield and El Pueblo, to Little Toyko and Biddy Mason Park. The list is not intended to be complete or inclusive, but illustrates links that connect the people of Los Angeles to the Cornfield, El Pueblo and the Los Angeles River.

Parks

Arroyo Seco
Biddy Mason Park
Confluence Park
Cornfield
Elysian Park
Los Angeles River
Los Angeles River Center
Taylor Yard

Neighborhoods

Boyle Heights
Chavez Ravine
Chinatown (New)
Chinatown (Old)
Chinatown Central & West Plaza
Lincoln Heights
Little Tokyo
Solano Canyon
Sonoratown
William Mead Housing Project

Cultural/Historical sites

1700 N. Main (beginning of Zoot Suit Riots)
Biddy Mason Homestead
Biddy Mason Memorial Wall
Breed Street Shul
Capitol Mills
Casa Italiana
Castelar School
Chinatown Heritage & Visitors' Center
Chinatown Massacre 1871 Site
Chinese American Museum
Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association
City Market
Dodger Stadium
El Pueblo: 425. N. Los Angeles Street

El Pueblo: Avila Adobe
El Pueblo: Biscailuz Building
El Pueblo: Brunswig buildings
El Pueblo: Calle de los Negros ("Nigger Alley")
El Pueblo: Campo Santo
El Pueblo: Coronel Adobe
El Pueblo: Firehouse Museum
El Pueblo: Garnier Building
El Pueblo: Hammel Building
El Pueblo: Hellman/Quon Building
El Pueblo: Houses of Ill Repute
El Pueblo: Italian Hall
El Pueblo: Jones Building
El Pueblo: Junipero Serra Park (Lugo Adobe Site)
El Pueblo: La Placita Catholic Church
El Pueblo: Latino Cultural & Performing Arts Cntr
El Pueblo: Los Pobladores Plaque
El Pueblo: Machine Shop
El Pueblo: Masonic Hall
El Pueblo: Merced Theatre
El Pueblo: Methodist Church
El Pueblo: Old Winery/El Paseo Inn
El Pueblo: Olvera Street
El Pueblo: Pelanconi House
El Pueblo: Pico House
El Pueblo: Plaza
El Pueblo: Plaza House
El Pueblo: Plaza site -- original
El Pueblo: Plaza Substation and Trolleys
El Pueblo: Sepulveda House
El Pueblo: Simpson Jones Building
El Pueblo: Siquieros Mural ("America Tropical")
at Italian Hall
El Pueblo: Tongva Garden
El Pueblo: Zanja Madre path

Cultural/Historical Sites (*continued*)

Evergreen Cemetery (integrated;
largest open space in Boyle Heights)
Flower Market
Fort Moore
Heritage Square
Japan American Cultural and Community
Center
Japanese American National Museum
Latino Museum of History, Art, and Culture
Lummis Adobe
Museum of Contemporary Art
N. Broadway Bridge (original fording site
for 1769 Portolá expedition)
San Antonio Winery
Southwest Museum of Native Americans
Union Center for the Arts
Union Station
Waterwheel
Yangna (Tongva Village)
Zanja Madre

Religious Sites

Chinese Methodist Church
First AME church
First Chinese Baptist Church
Iglesia Christiana
La Placita Catholic Church
Little Tokyo Buddhist Temple
Little Tokyo Union Church
Our Lady of Angels Cathedral
St. Anthony's Croatian Church & Center
St. Bridget's Chinese Catholic Mission
St. Peter's Italian Church
St. Vibiana's Cathedral

APPENDIX II

HISTORY & CULTURE OF SITE

From the start of its work, the Committee recognized the importance of the site's history and culture. At the September 18, 2002 meeting, Committee member Peter Aeschbacher gave a presentation on the history of the site, stressing the influence of connections of various types associated with the site: rail, water, and Gabrielo paths. The site is the story of place, explained Peter, who studied it while a graduate student at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His research uncovered connections and trends that link the site throughout history. Committee member Robert García submitted a report on the cultural, historical and recreational value of sports in urban parks, "Dreams of Fields: Soccer, Community and Equal Justice."

Important historical events and stories emerged at the October 16, 2002 meeting including:

- Prehistory- Native American village cultures associated with site.
- Water wheel- located nearby, brought water from Los Angeles River to first pueblo of Los Angeles.
- Railroad industry - impact on immigration, jobs, housing, transportation, and more.
- Los Angeles growth (in and around site) and connectivity of site (on numerous levels, e.g. the Los Angeles River, neighborhoods)
- Southern Pacific Rail- impact on site and region, and as a landowner.
- Discrimination- suffered by many ethnic groups in area.
- Immigration- many immigrants first arrived and settled in this area.
- Chinese Massacre- lynching of Chinese in nearby El Pueblo more than 100 years ago.
- Exploitation/deportation (by railroads) in early 1930s as thousands of Mexican immigrants deported back to Mexico out of Union Station.

Stories of people's "struggles" throughout history continued to be discussed at the November 2, 2002 meeting including:

- 1871 Chinese Massacre- lynching of Chinese in nearby El Pueblo over 100 years ago.
- 1930s Discrimination (Union Station)
- Destruction of old Chinatown in 1930s to build the railroad's Union Station.
- World War II - Japanese-American Internment
- World War II- Zoot Suit Riot in nearby streets between Latino youth.
- 1950s Chavez Ravine- community dislocation and unfulfilled promises by the City of Los Angeles to build Dodger Stadium.
- 1965 Watts Riot and Rebellion & 1992 Los Angeles Riots and Rebellion.
- Solano Canyon (see description on next page) endured and struggled against numerous changes.
- Recent- Chinatown Alliance- coalition of community groups that successfully

fought City of Los Angeles and developers to save land from warehouse development.

Participants were also encouraged to share the neighborhood histories such as the following one for the Solano Canyon Community.

EXAMPLE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY - SOLANO CANYON

The Solano Canyon is surrounded by the hills of Elysian Park. Capt. Portolá in 1769 documents in his journal the hills at the entrance to the canyon on North Broadway as covered with wild roses blooming profusely. To the north of the intersection of Solano and North Broadway at the entrance to Elysian Park is a historical marker that commemorates the expedition in 1769 of Captain Portolá and his men camping nearby at what is now Downey Park on the corner of N. Spring St.

In the middle 1840s, many immigrants who arrived and found no place to live camped in the Solano Canyon seeking shelter. Later, as the city grew, some of these same families stayed and built their homes, enjoying the pastoral hills and valleys of the canyon and the fertile soil for growing vegetables and planting orchards. In one lot today remains a 100 year old wisteria that blooms every spring.

Irish, Italian, French, Chinese and Hispanics lived in the canyon for many generations, contributing to the history of Los Angeles. The families found jobs in the city in farmlands and vineyards building roads and in the 1870s working for the railroads. Today residents vary in economic status and education from blue collar workers to professionals.

There are only four blocks with four small streets that crisscross the canyon. The Pasadena Freeway severs the canyon in half but has not separated the community. Solano Elementary School was built on the present Solano Canyon Community Garden. In 1925 a new building was built to house more students, across Figueroa (now the Pasadena Freeway) and today is still being used as an elementary school.

At the slope of Elysian Park facing south above Casanova St., an auto-camp was opened in the early 1900s. Visitors could drive into the park where specially designed terraces offered a place to park your car and camp outdoors in the same space.

Today houses built 100 years ago still stand among new, modern apartments enhanced by the beauty of the Elysian Hills.

The community has never lost its charm and peaceful atmosphere, making it very desirable to live in the Solano Canyon.

The committee recognized the multiplicities of cultures whose unique histories and interactions are an integral part of the Cornfield story. African-American, Chinese, Native American, Tongva, Croatian, Mexican American, Spanish, French, Irish, Latin American, Italian, and German cultures, among others, have all contributed to the surrounding neighborhood. Their unique histories and interactions are part of the Cornfield story.

Nurture

In discussing the issues and trends, the Committee described various challenges but found the community has also engaged in positive, collaborative, consensus building approaches, seizing opportunity and maintaining hope. Some institutions, such as neighborhood churches, have provided a community foundation. Genuine, diversifying democracy is part of the social fabric.

Struggle

As noted above, people and communities associated with the site have experienced many struggles. The vision for the park must honor these struggles.

Youth and Children

The Committee consistently noted the importance of planning for and serving children.

Recreation

The “sun” was drawn as a soccer ball to reflect the pervasive and critical importance of addressing the diverse recreational needs of park visitors and neighboring underserved communities.

Some trends, issues and concepts considered the character, quality or nature of the experiences individuals should receive at the site. For example, art and the inspiration of all the senses should play a prominent role. At the landscape level the park should provide a scenic landscape, good design and inspirational aesthetics. The park must also be safe and promote health. Finally it should be a place of education, discovery, learning, and exploration.

In tandem was an expressed need for recreation and play space. Support for open space for play, organized or league sports (especially soccer), and activities promoting and enhancing tourism was outlined.

Another general category of concepts also emerged. This considered the special complexities, relationships and interconnections the site presents. Primary was connecting people with the cultural and historical significance of the site and creating an understanding of natural resources and the importance of open space. The group considered the demand for space to feature visual and performing arts and considered how plants might be used to create a cultural landscape (living plant sculpture and interactive gardens). There is a need for holistic planning to reconcile the many obvious demands.

At a fundamental level, “politics” must be addressed. In addition to the complexities of navigating the local Los Angeles governing bodies, historical community issues of inequities in education and representation are all part of this story.

The group suggested ways to consider connections/linkages at the site, including development of stairs, a greenbelt, a river connection, pedestrian access, and neighborhood and county housing links. Additional transportation options included: buses, commuter rail, river bike trail, and connecting LA to other urban centers, hub development, and railroad connection. This connectivity took on special importance as transportation was an important feature for new settlers arriving in Los Angeles at this very site and for industry.

Continuing with the theme of connectivity, the group discussed the impact of the park on the Community, particularly as it relates to economic vitality, decline, and development, Lincoln Heights (creation of employment), and local plans for development. This led to a discussion of the park periphery and issues of tourism, overall employment, local business health and concerns with the current industrial perimeter.

Additional connections, linkages and relationships included those associated with Griffith and Elysian Park neighborhoods and park or open space developments such as LA River, Taylor and El Pueblo.

The group also described various considerations, remembering the historic Olmsted Report that described the critical need for parks, playgrounds, schools, beaches, athletic fields and transportation parkways in the urban landscape. The features for consideration included ecological conservation, such as the use of corn for brownfield rehabilitation, habitat and ecological reconciliation, use of indigenous plants and support for indigenous animals and wildlife. The group offered words such as “shade” and “sanctuary” to describe how the site might be. Other important words were “sustainability” and “water.”

The water theme appeared to cross many of the categories as it related to the history (water wheel and Zanja Madre), the river connections and the importance of water features on site.

The issues, trends, and opportunities were then prioritized by the Committee. Those receiving substantial discussion included:

- Art, culture, historical, water emphasis, recreation play, transportation, and peripheral development
- Gathering place—“Meadows”

Some current responses to trends, issues and opportunities have been undesirable and include:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| • Concrete | • Harm |
| • Fragmentation | • Poor Access |
| • Neglect | • Invisible/hidden |
| • Underutilized | • Inadequate |
| • Disrupted Linkage | • LA Park – Poor |
| • Degradation | • Disparities |

APPENDIX IV

LIST OF VISION SCENARIOS FOR SITE

The following are vision scenarios for the site developed by members of the Cornfield State Parks Advisory Committee and the public at the November 16, 2002 Vision Workshop. The scenarios were designed as dramatic renditions of plausible, possible futures for the year 2020, based on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations as well as the continuation of other regional trends.

COMMUNITY THRIVES

Spring Street and Main Street are no longer there. We now have beautiful trees and the river. The Gold Line transit activity is now underground and no longer visually disruptive. A historic trolley runs through the park connecting Pueblo de Los Angeles to Taylor Yards up to Griffith Park. William Mead Housing now has several learning centers: culture, history, ecology of river. Industrial buildings on the other side of Main Street all now replaced with active recreation such as soccer fields, swimming pools. LA River is no longer a concrete channel. Channels of water come from the LA River into the park that has a pond and big water wheel.

GREEN AND BEAUTIFUL & SOCIAL UTOPIA

Zanja Madre is now a beautiful park. There are lots of green and huge, mature trees. There is a network of trains that allows people to commute to or recreate along the river. There are thousands of trails along the river. People in the park can fish at the river. Kids are playing and there are picnickers and bikers. There is an urban institute designed by Frank Gehry dedicated to development and the future of Los Angeles. Social utopia is achieved through a new regional form of government. Vibrant area on streets and arts and culture. Kids in area know all about Zanja Madre. There is a real sense of place.

RIVER PARK

Due to a 2011 Earthquake, the area has been redesigned and is now known as the "River Park" and a walking area. The Zanja Madre is now part of the park since transportation systems have all been moved underground. River Park extends from Santa Susana and San Gabriel mountains down to the ocean. The park became the catalyst to solve many of the transportation, educational, and hydraulic problems of area. The asphalt at Dodger Stadium was removed and became a large soccer field. Remains of Chavez Ravine and other areas were re-created after the earthquake but level areas provided soccer fields at many locations. The area is an urban center with outlying areas such as the Arboretum that are like satellites. There is a San Antonio type river center along the river and the great tourist attraction provides income for the area.

“Z” PARK SPAWNS CULTURAL CENTER

“Z” Park is part of an extensive Los Angeles River park system running from the Valley to San Pedro. The nucleus of the “Z” Park is a Tongva village called Yangna. The cultural center adjacent to “Z” Park, established by a consortium of museums, draws many to the area. People come to the site because it’s the authentic thing, the real deal, the place where Los Angeles began. Los Angeles, not New York, is now THE PLACE to be.

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM INSPIRED BY PARK & COMMUNITY BLOSSOMS

Residents of William Meade Housing develop entrepreneurial and community organizing skills, inspired by the State Park that made an exciting and inspiring place for the local community. A huge farmers market, recreation groups—soccer and baseball teams play, artists give shows and gang activity has almost completely disappeared. The Governor has brought light rail into the park so people from San Francisco can be there in a few hours. All are invited to join community soccer games.

A Possible Negative Future

In considering possible futures, the group received a grave reminder that a failure to move forward could have negative consequences. A negative alternative future is also possible.

HUGE HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT TO BE REPLACED BY WAREHOUSES

The site has become the biggest homeless encampment in North America. Business people plan to build warehouses and displace the homeless. The area used to be a state park but when the last ranger left she told a homeless person, “We never wanted to be there in the first place.” A parent in the area remembers that some people formed a coalition to build a park, thinking they would get a ball field but they didn’t. Now they trust the business people more than anyone else and hope someone will bless the homeless because they can’t solve their problems and people need a place to work.

Acknowledgments

Cover Design:

Ulises Diaz

Text Working Group:

Lewis MacAdams, Joel Reynolds, Robert Garcia,
Munson Kwok

Front and Back Cover Credits and Acknowledgments:

Nishith Dhandha, Julie Lee, Esther Margulies,
Philip Young, Sean Woods

1858 Hancock map

1894 B.W. Pierce map detail

1909 Brewster Pacific map detail

1931, 1937 Spence Aerial photos, Echo Park Historical Society

1989 Plan for City North

1998 River Through Downtown plan and section

1999 Zanja Madre studies, FoLAR, Douglas
Suisman, Suisman Urban Design

2000 Chinese Cultural Square, Rupert Mok and
Architects

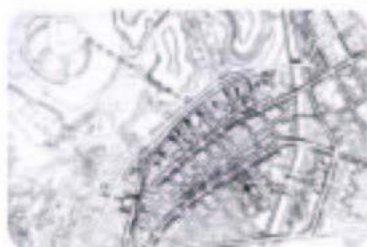
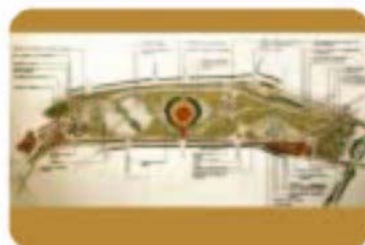
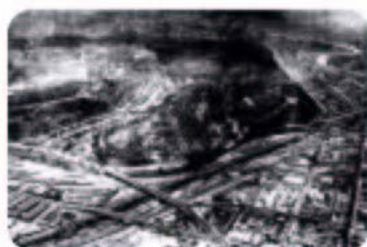
2000 MTA Existing Zanja Madre Location Map

2000 FoLAR LA River Bikeway/Downtown
Connection, map by Joe Linton

2001 Latino Urban Forum Conceptual Planning
Diagram

2001 North East Trees Cornfields Park Design

2001 Conceptual Plan by Arthur Golding & Associates



Vision

Community